

Athlete Profile (National)

Jeff Snover – Inspired by Fellow Athletes

Jeff Snover, 40, of Evans, Georgia, is one of the National Veterans Wheelchair Games competitors with many years of service to his country – more than 18, to be exact. Snover served in the U.S. Army as a Chief Warrant Officer in Korea as well as in Iraq, where he saw combat. He returned from Iraq unharmed, but was seriously injured only three months after returning home. While cutting down a tree, it suddenly fell on top of him, causing damage to his spinal cord.



Although he is classified as a paraplegic, Snover's injury has not stopped him from staying mobile and competitive. In June, he is joining more than 500 fellow veterans to compete in the 27th National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Milwaukee, Wisconsin – his second year of competing at the event. Last year, he came home with gold medals in table tennis and weightlifting as well as a silver medal in softball. Snover estimates that he puts in more than five hours a week of intense training with help from a personal trainer. His workout regimen includes handcycling and fine-tuning his table tennis skills. The training is working – he played in the U.S. Table Tennis Nationals last December. "It's an inspiration to me seeing folks prevail over their disabilities," Snover says. "That is an amazing part of the National Veterans Wheelchair Games and other wheelchair sports competitions."

Sports are nothing new to Snover. An avid golfer before his injury, he has now turned his attention to wheelchair sports. "Prior to my injury, I used to love to play golf and run," he says. "Now, I have been introduced to so many great sports and I plan to become even more competitive." He began playing wheelchair basketball after the 2006 Games, noting that he really enjoys the team events including softball. This past April, he attended the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic in Snowmass Village, Colorado, for the second year in a row. While there, he participated in downhill skiing, sled hockey and wheelchair fencing. For Snover, his latest goals include both national and international competition. "My newest goal is to compete at the 2012 Paralympics," he says, referring to the equivalent of the Olympics for top athletes with a wide range of disabilities.

"I really enjoyed the camaraderie of my fellow athletes," Snover said, when reflecting on his experience at last year's Wheelchair Games. "I appreciated the assistance I got from other veterans when I was a novice and I hope to return the favor this year."